

REMARKS

STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-21 were pending.

Claims 1-10 and 16-21 have been canceled.

Claim 22 is newly added.

Accordingly, Claims 11-15 and 22 are pending. Of these, Claims 11-14 were rejected, while Claim 15 was objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim.

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Claims 1-10 and 16-21, previously withdrawn, have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter therein, for possible inclusion in a divisional application.

Claim 15 was objected to as being dependent on rejected independent Claim 13, but was deemed allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all the elements and limitations of its base independent claim (here, Claim 13) and any intervening claims. As such, Claim 15 has been appropriately rewritten in independent form, and, therefore, is believed allowable.

Regarding Claims 11 and 13, Applicants noted in a previous Amendment that the present invention, as characterized in these claims, is different from the cited prior-art references (specifically, the Blanck patent) in that the blocking device and blocking means are configured for attachment to the firearm's receiver instead of to the firearm's stock. (This means that the present invention can be used in situations where a firearm stock is not available). In response, the Examiner noted that the claims do not specify that the blocking device/means is attached only to the receiver.

Accordingly, Claims 11 and 13 have been amended to recite that the blocking device/means is attached only to the firearm's receiver, and to no other portion of the firearm. As such, these claims are believed allowable, as are claims 12 and 14, which depend from Claims 11 and 13.

Kindly note, since the Examiner disagreed that the use of "blocking" device or means (as opposed to "locking" device or means), as defined by the Applicants, differentiated the present invention over the Blanck patent and other prior art references, Claims 11-15 have been changed back to their original form (*i.e.*, as relating to reciting a "lock means" or "locking device" instead of a blocking means/device), and are meant to cover devices that block, lock with, engage, or otherwise interfere with a firearm's action.

CLAIM 22

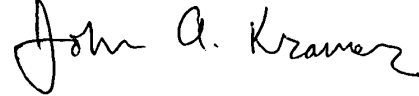
New Claim 22 is generally similar to pre-amendment Claim 13. Claim 22 is believed allowable as incorporating another of the Examiner's suggestions. In particular, in Applicants' prior Amendment, the claims were amended to recite a "blocking" device or means instead of a "locking" or "lock" device/means, where "blocking" was defined as blocking a firearm action's normal path of movement instead of engaging the action, as is the case with a locking device. In response, the Examiner stated that "blocking device," as defined by the Applicants, was not sufficiently defined to differentiate the claims over the Blanck patent.

Accordingly, new Claim 22 further defines the "blocking device" by reciting that it blocks the path of travel of a portion of the action without engaging or extending into an aperture therein, thereby preventing the firearm from being fired without the need for alignment with, or especial provision of, an aperture in the action. Obviously, this confers the advantage of not having to drill holes into the firearm or otherwise provide special apertures/holes, as might increase manufacturing costs, require re-design of the firearm, or compromise structural/component integrity. Also, it confers the advantage of not necessarily having to position the firearm action at one particular location for the blocking device to be engaged. In the Blanck patent, on the other hand, an aperture has to be specially provided for the device to function properly (see, *e.g.*, FIGS. 5-7 in Blanck).

In light of the above, new Claim 22 is believed distinguished from the prior art per the Examiner's suggestion, and, therefore, allowable.

In view of the amendments and arguments set forth herein, Claims 11-15 and 22 of the present application are deemed in condition for allowance and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested at this time.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John A. Kramer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

John A. Kramer
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 46302
Customer No. 27804
HOLLAND & BONZAGNI, P.C.
171 Dwight Road, Suite 302
Longmeadow, MA 01106-1700
(413) 567-2076

Date: December 8, 2003

[00170P17]